

**PLANT:** Tallowtree or Popcorn tree (*Triadica sebifera* or *Sapium sebiferum*) is a deciduous tree with heart-shaped leaves.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Tallowtree reaches 60 ft tall and 3 ft in diameter. Leaves have a wide-angled base and turn yellow to red in fall. Twigs lime-green becoming gray with scattered brownish dots and later with striations, leaf scars numerous and half-circles becoming raised, bark light gray and fissured, sap milky.

Flowers appear April – June. Slender spikes up to 8 inches of tiny flowers, yellowish green sepals but no petals, female flowers at base and male flowers along the spike. Seeds appear August – December in small clusters at branch terminals. Dark green in summer becoming dry and splitting to reveal 3 white wax-coated seeds that remain attached until winter (resembling popcorn and thus the common name).



Resembles cottonwoods (*Populus*), which have wavy margined leaves and flaking bark.

**ECOLOGY:** Invades stream banks, riverbanks, and wet areas like ditches as well as upland sites. Thrives in both freshwater and saline soils. Spreading widely through ornamental plantings, bird- and water-dispersed seeds and colonizing by rootsprouts.

**SYNONYMS:** Chinese tallowtree.

**HERBICIDE CONTROL:** For large trees, make stem injections using Arsenal AC, Pathfinder II, or Garlon 3A in dilutions and cut spacings specified on the herbicide label (anytime except March and April). The same herbicides can be used to cut-treat stems and stumps. Alternatively, apply Velpar L to the soil surface within 3 ft. of the stem (one squirt of spotgun per 1-inch stem diameter) or in a grid pattern at spacings specified on the herbicide label when treating extensive infestations. For saplings, apply Garlon 4 as a 20% solution (2.5 quarts per 3-gal. mix) in commercially available basal oil, diesel fuel, or kerosene with a penetrant (check with herbicide distributor) to young bark as a basal spray. For seedlings and saplings, apply Arsenal AC as a 1% solution (4 ounces per 3-gal. mix), Krenite S as a 30% solution (3 quarts per 3-gal. mix), or Garlon 4 as a 2% solution (8 ounces per 3-gal. mix) in water with a surfactant to thoroughly wet all leaves in July to October. **WARNING:** Arsenal AC and Velpar L can injure or kill plants with roots in the affected area. Always read and follow label directions carefully.

Source: Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests, James Miller, 2004

Photo Credit: Cheryl McCormick, The University of Georgia, [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)



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